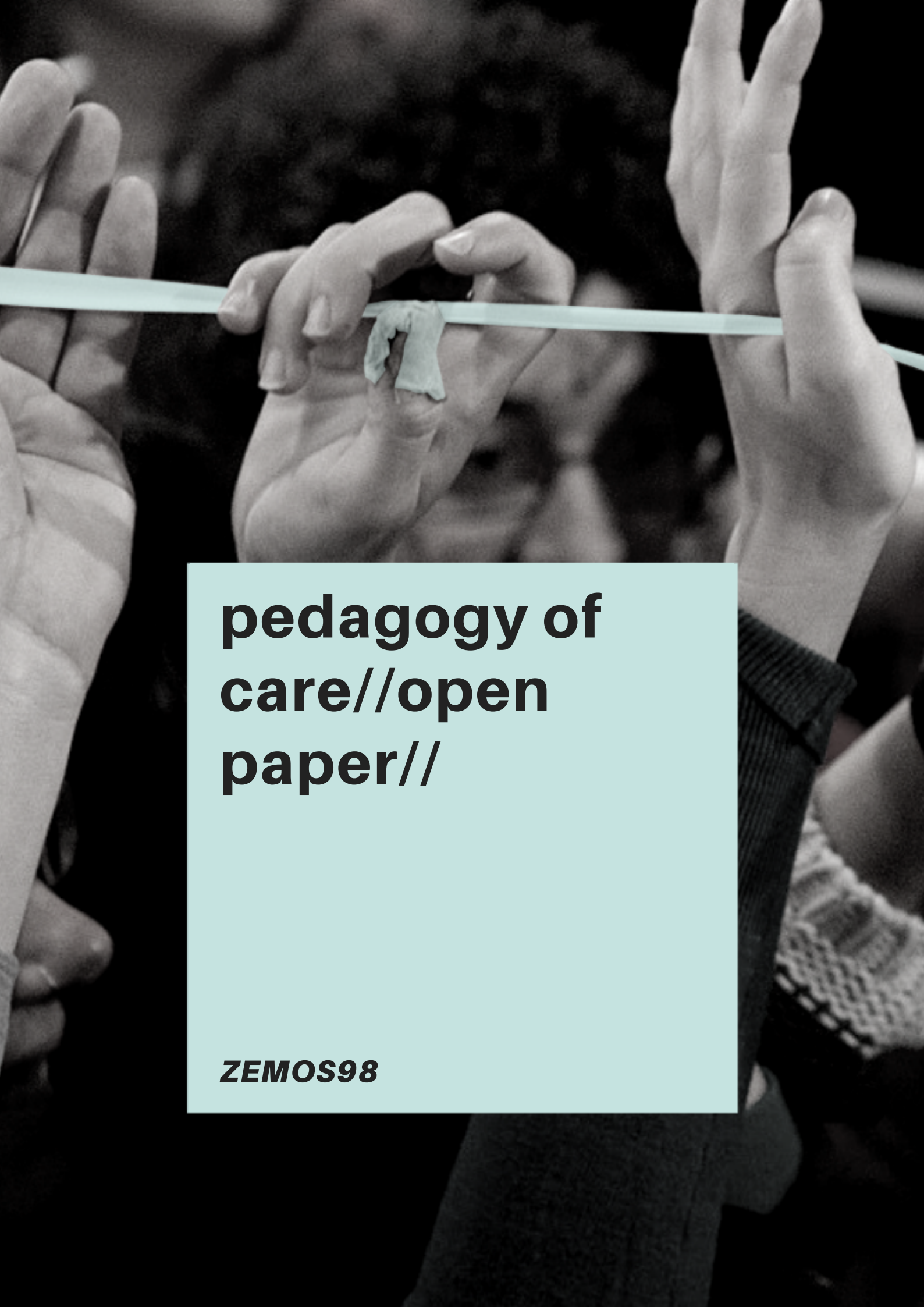


pedagogy of care//open paper//

ZEMOS98

I. Why is Pedagogy of Care relevant?

This Open Paper is intended to be a practical tool for:

Individuals struggling to perform a delicate balancing act between personal life and work; those caring for others or intending to implement practices of self-care for themselves and others; those exhausted by the imposed conditions of life; those who have been told that there is something heroic in sacrificing your own well-being in struggles for social transformation.

Organisations aiming to review their governance and how formal rules and informal relationships create a culture of work that usually hides power dynamics and unfair distributions of care among their members. Providing time and space for reflections about how care is managed beyond the urgencies of daily struggles is crucial for the sustainability of organisations and movements.

Funders wanting to take a closer look at the relations they establish with grantees and other stakeholders. Grants are sometimes quite inflexible, grantees usually struggle to fulfil the activities no-matter-what in a fluctuating context that pushes their needs in different directions. This often results in an erosion in the relationships between funders and grantees and among members of the same organisation.

If you have ever experienced any of these contradictions first hand, you should read this Open Paper as it offers tools to help overcome these situations. Pedagogy of Care's Open Paper is a road map to stimulate debates in your organisations.

Use it, remix it, enjoy it!



Credit: Gema Valencia

II. What is Pedagogy of Care?

PEDAGOGY OF CARE IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH WORK ON CARE ECONOMY, COLLABORATIVE ACTIVISM AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. ITS MAIN GOAL IS TO MAP AND PROVIDE GREATER VISIBILITY TO CARE PRACTICES DEVELOPED IN ACTIVISTS CONTEXTS AIMING TO CREATE MOVEMENTS BASED ON MORE SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES WHERE POWER IS FAIRLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG THEIR MEMBERS.

ABSTRACT: WHAT WILL YOU FIND HERE?

This Open Paper is a reflection on how, by unveiling care, we will be able to make activist organisations more democratic. It is also a set of practical tools and methodologies that can help us implement in our own struggles the theoretical side carried out brilliantly by feminist activists for decades. In the next few pages, you will find a 1300-word article explaining the key findings and quoting some sources of inspiration for the Pedagogy of Care research. Right after that, there are a few pages dedicated to concrete tools you can experiment with, whether to make your colleagues aware of the importance of care or to uncover inequalities arising from the invisible management of care in your organisation.Be aware that this open paper is not intended as a tool to gain relevance in academia; far from it. We want it to be a device to be used at your convenience, so please feel free to use, modify or remix it.

THANKS

We have to thank a large number of persons for the ideas and resources that led us to this Open Paper. Thank you to those interviewed: Astrid Agenjo, Mónica Ortíz y Carolina León, Lanónima, El Topo Tabernario y La Sinmiedo (género y cultura).Ivanna Risitano and Federico Alagna (Cambiamo Messina dal Basso), Dorota, Sebastian, Karolina (Pedagogical Theatre Collective), Natalija Simović and Dobrica Veselinovic (Ne Davimo Beograd) and Marija Ćaćić and Tina Tešija (Feminist School and Zagreb je nas). Thank you to those who attended the Pedagogy of Care meeting thanks to a FundAction Rethink Grant: Jovana Djordjevic (Frida Fund), Rose Longhurst (Edge Fund), Andrea Botero (Researcher), Magda Pochec (FemFund) and Lara García (Researcher). Thanks to Guerrilla Foundation who allowed us to spend some time thinking about these topics. And thanks to Guerrilla Translation for helping us with the English translation.

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ZEMOS98 mediates between institutions, collectives, social enterprises and other actors with the goal of creating cross-sectoral spaces for political dialogue. It does so by developing diverse participatory processes, by caring for the commons, by working towards hacking mainstream narratives and designing counter narrative media productions.

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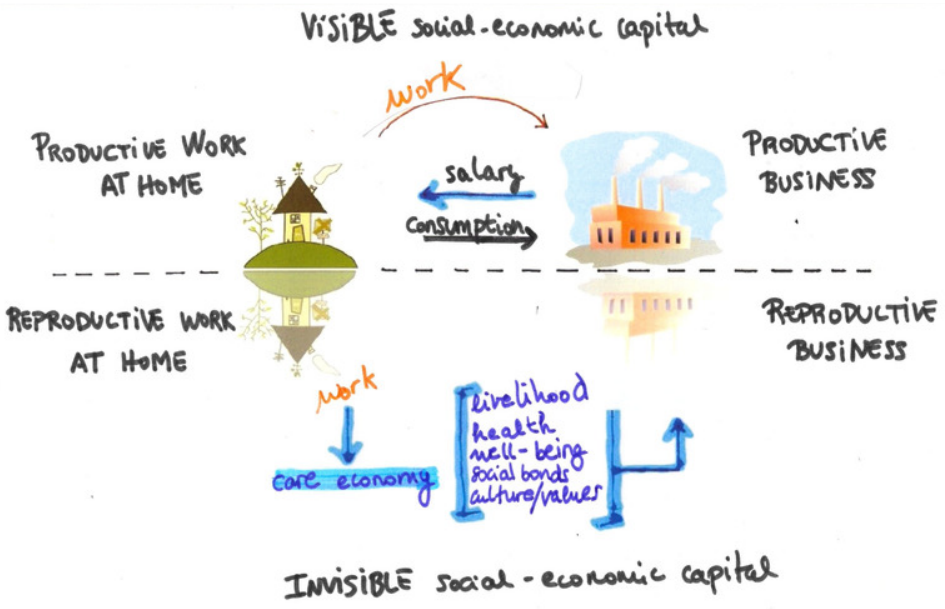
III. A Pedagogy of Care for and by democratic social organisations

WITHOUT A REDISTRIBUTION OF CARE, THERE WILL BE NO DEMOCRACY. EVEN THEN, IT IS OFTEN CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY -IF NOT BOTHERING-: SOMETHING TO KEEP OUT OF THE GENERAL STREAM OF THE STRUGGLES WE ARE CARRYING OUT TOWARDS A FAIRER WORLD.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone needs care throughout their life. When we talk about care, we usually focus on attending the needs of children or elders. Adults are supposed to have a life that stands on its own. Nevertheless, this assumption hides the fact that, in order to be able to produce the material conditions for living, we have to care for others and/or be cared for by others on a daily basis. “Capitalism just makes visible what has an economic value, but it can’t exist without the unpaid care work that takes place at home”, points out the eco-feminist researcher Yayo Herrero (Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía, 2016). But in order to identify care as something transversal, happening throughout our entire lives, we have to recognise that we are intrinsically vulnerable and thus interdependent on each other.

Often, this does not happen. As Herrero (Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía, 2016) puts it: “The crisis of care is a tension that takes place in Western capitalist societies between the amount of time needed to care for life at home, and the growing difficulties to make it compatible with our works out of home.” Double working days were made possible because care work is usually made invisible by depriving it of any social value; it is also increasingly commodified, resulting in new transnational, colonial relationships with women living in more precarious conditions. The fact that we depend on each other has been hidden after the naturalisation of care, as part of women’s care work, but also after economical relations that enforceprecariousness and isolation among women that lack rights.



Reproductive vs productive economy. Credits: María PTQK

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPACES

When it comes to talking about care out of the home, the issue gets more slippery. As Silvia Federici (Federici & Sitrin, 2016) reminds us, "the concept of social reproduction" is useful for us "to stress that the reproduction of the workforce also takes place outside of the home, in schools and hospitals, for instance." Care happens in any human relation and is transversal to any institution, as they organize quite a few of our interactions in society. We talk about both formal institutions such as Health or Education, and informal institutions such as family or social movements.

When it comes to looking at how social organisations work, we usually find out that even if they govern themselves in a more horizontal way than other social structures, the space they grant for care and sustainability of life is often at risk, at the bottom of the list of priorities. Moreover, social organisations usually find it difficult to address how we deal with care, as there is a lack of both social value and any mechanisms to develop it effectively. It's important, as Vega, Martínez and Paredes (2018) say, "to talk about what is communal in care because it makes visible the cooperative nature it may present and throws a light over activities than tend to be darkened" (pp. 17).

While homes are usually very traditional spaces wherecare workers are easily isolated from each other, social organisations are places where care is recognised more and more as a collective issue. However, there are obstacles to managing care in a distributed way and a lack of precedents to inspire in Western societies. Every person brings his or her own social constructions wherever she or he goes, and it takes considerable time and effort to learn when and where care takes place. What's more, these organisations existi in a very aggressive capitalist environment to which they must react, and are often shaped by these impositions in their struggle to survive.

"WE DON'T HAVE A RELAXED SPACE TO EXERCISE DISCUSSIONS ON CARE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT WE CANNOT FRAME IT LITERALLY LIKE THAT BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE WILL CONSIDER IT THERAPY… THE MINDFULNESS INDUSTRY IS ALSO KILLING THE POLITICS OF CARE" NATALIJA SIMOVIĆ (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, 2018).

Furthermore, horizontal structures are quite successful at covering power relations among members. Richard Bartlett (2019) says that "words like 'non-hierarchical', 'self-managing' and 'horizontal' are kind of vague codes, pointing to our intention to create healthy power relations. When I said 'Enspiral *-the organisation in which he works-* is a non-hierarchical organisation', what I really meant was 'Enspiral is a non-coercive organisation'. That's the important piece, we're trying to work without coercion."

The result is that social organisations succeed at adapting rhetorically to care discourses — and this produces changes in the way they talk about their practices — but they fail to transform this discourse into an actual practice that models a new material reality for them.

Lara García (personal communication, 2019) points out that "talking about transgressive care means taking into account both material and symbolic dimensions, acknowledging that everybody is vulnerable. These views have to take into account premises of gender, class or ethnicity in order to avoid the feminisation of care; and also that those who are the most vulnerable are, at the same time, the ones who are spending more time caring for others. Care has much transformative power, we can outline new social structures by reorganizing and reformulating it, by acquiring collective responsibilities over it."

So, take a deep breath: this requires time, effort and an attitude that's open to self-criticism — things we usually lack in social organisations sustained by tired, self-exploited members. When we don't acknowledge care practices as one of the main social capitals in our organisations, we are delegating it to women, who traditionally have carried this burden. This not only leads to inequality but also has a bad effect on any organisation's sustainability. Social organisations that don't talk about care (or just use it as makeup to obscure harmful power dynamics among members) run a constant risk of burnout for those in charge of it: they will participate less and in worse conditions, and eventually they will find other spaces where they feel more welcome. Addressing care in both a material and symbolic way means redistributing power, making your organisation more democratic and more sustainable for the years and struggles to come.

"TO INFLUENCE SOCIETY YOU HAVE TO CHECK HIDDEN HIERARCHIES AND ROLES IN YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION. MEN SPEAK MORE, THEY USE MORE PHYSICAL AND RHETORIC SPACE AND THEY TALK WAY LONGER, AMONG OTHER THINGS. WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE BETTER RELATIONS, BETTER CARE, TO BE MORE TRANSPARENT". MARIJA ĆAĆIĆ AND TINA TEŠIJA (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, 2018).

TOWARDS MATERIAL AND NARRATIVE PRACTICES OF CARE

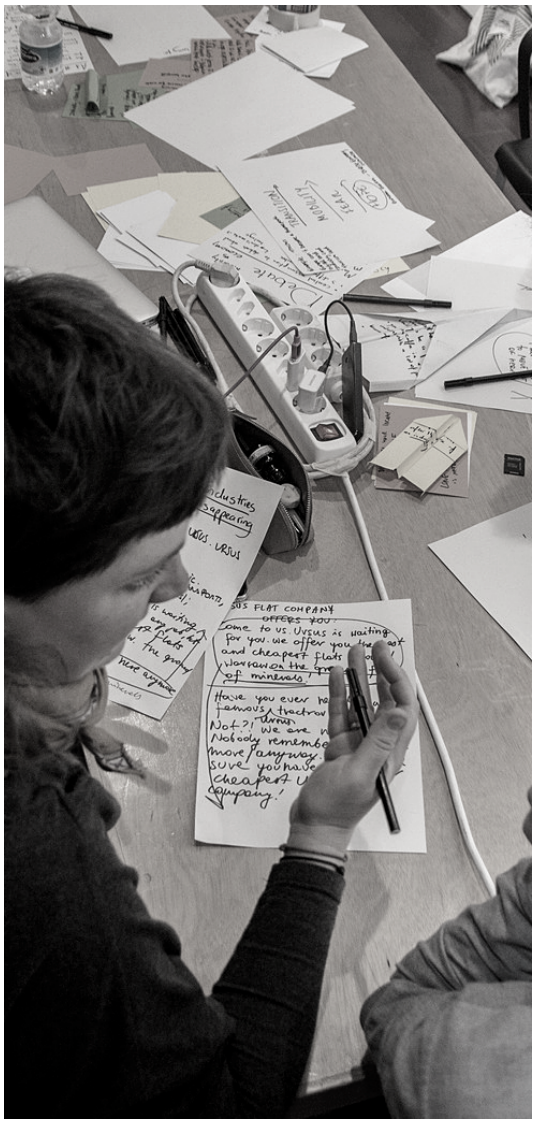
Care is a tool for social transformation when it is rooted in actual practices and mechanisms that guarantee its redistribution towards a lasting social reorganisation. In order to do that, it is crucial to reclaim the importance of care as a social value, to work for more than appreciation; to work for the legitimacy of those who do the caring. New narratives, ideas, and imagination will flourish and spread from there.

"THE MOMENT A CONCEPT LIKE "CARE WORK" IS TAKEN OUT OF A PRACTICE, IT IS MADE STATIC AND REIFIED. IT BECOMES AN INNOCUOUS IDEA, LIKE THE "CARE SOCIETY", SO POPULAR TODAY IN SOME FEMINIST CIRCLES PRECISELY BECAUSE IT IS THOUGHT IN ISOLATION FROM WHAT WE NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE IT." (FEDERICI & SITRIN, 2016)

Even if many organisations across the world are working to improve the way they deal with care, there is no perfect way of making it compatible with the neoliberal systems in which we are immersed. If we want to fully acknowledge this, we have to keep it open to discussion, modifiable, improvable. In summary, it requires effort. A lot.

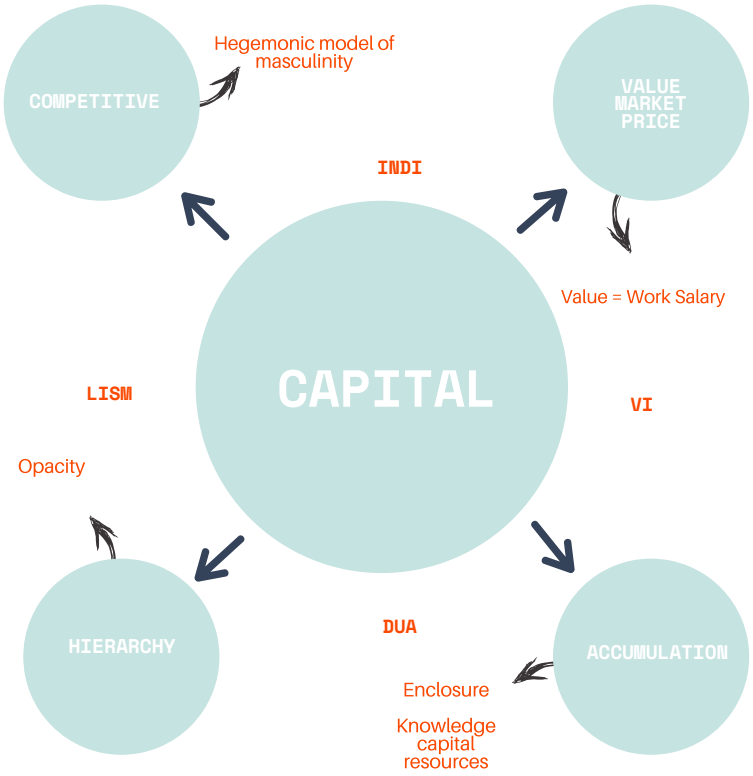
But it has rewards, too. We strongly believe that by working on a social reorganisation of care, we can achieve radical happiness, a concept that Lynne Segal discovered in Adrienne Rich's work. Radical happiness is "the joy she sometimes saw flowing all around her when people shared a sense of 'true participation in society' " (Segal, 2017).

"SOLIDARITY NEEDS TO BE ORGANISED" MARIJA ĆAĆIĆ AND TINA TEŠIJA (PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, 2018)

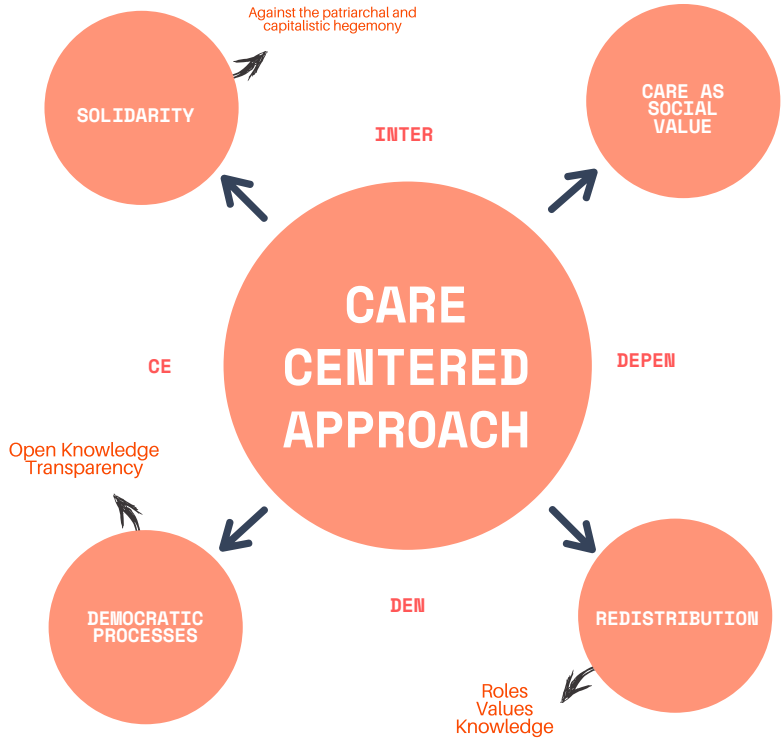


Credit: Gema Valencia

CAPITAL AT THE CENTER



LIFE AT THE CENTER



IV. Tools to work with care in your organisation

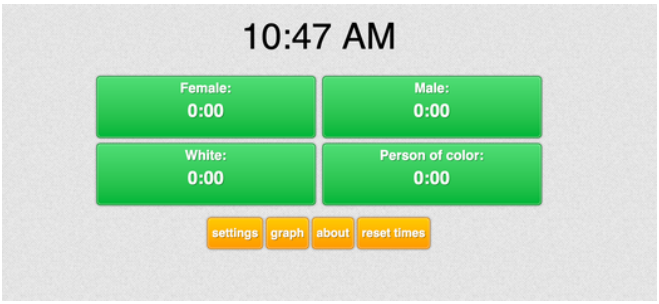
IF OUR AIM IS A RADICAL HAPPINESS, WE HAVE TO DELVE INTO THE WAYS WE DISTRIBUTE CARE AMONG MEMBERS OF OUR ORGANISATIONS. BUT HOW DO WE CONVINCE OTHERS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CARE? HOW CAN WE ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IN ORDER TO PRODUCE REAL CHANGES IN THE WAY WE WORK? HERE ARE SOME TOOLS TO START A DEBATE AROUND CARE IN YOUR ORGANISATION AND TO DEEPEN AND IMPROVE THE WAY IT IS CURRENTLY MANAGED.

INITIAL

NAME	**Care Questionnaire**
CREDIT	FRIDA Found
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	Individual
TIME	5 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	This questionnaire developed by Frida Fund is aimed to help trigger conversations related to care in the individual, organisational and funder level.
HOW	A checklist with simple questions that help you to identify how are you dealing with your work-life balance in the individual level, but also how it works when it is related to how organisations are managed, and how funders work with grantees. Go through the list and give answers to the questions, after that, share it with the rest of the members in your organisations to have a common understanding about how we collectively deal with care and how it can be improved. At **FRIDA Fund's website** you will find more useful resources.

NAME	**Timer for assemblies**
CREDIT	Charlie DeTar
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	A person counts time for the whole assembly or meeting
TIME	10 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	If you are taking part in an organisation where assembly is a way of getting to a consensus.
HOW	Time off is a tool for keeping track of speaking time by categories of identity (e.g. sex, gender, racial identity, power position, etc). It can be used to help people think about whether speaking time in their organization's meetings is really equitable. Please, be aware that this tool has limitations related to how it understands identity in a binary way.





Credit: Julio Albarrán

NAME	**Emotional Forecast**
CREDIT	Collective intelligence
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	Everyone in a meeting
	2 minutes per person
TIME **WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?**	We are in an endless struggle to make our work compatible with life. Spending some time at the beginning of your meetings will help everyone to be aware and co-responsible of where is everyone standing at that moment.
HOW	How are you? It is a simple question that often requires deep thinking. Set aside your productive mindset for a moment, take a minute to think how you feel and share it with the rest of the group. It is important to create a safe space where everyone is able to share their concerns and the others have an active listening attitude.



Credit: Gema Valencia



Credit: Gema Valencia

MEDIUM

NAME	**Rotating Roles**
CREDIT	ZEMOS98
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	Everyone in a meeting
TIME	10 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	Social organisations are usually structured in a horizontal way, but this does not mean that there aren't power relations forming the way they are, in fact horizontality often hides them under the lack of a hierarchical structure.
HOW	**Step 1.** Plan a meeting for everyone in your organisation. **Step 2.** Work collectively on a list of the different daily tasks performed to keep the structure of the organisation running, paying special attention to those which do not usually receive any reward. Remember to include both tasks that are considered productive (such as taking notes in the meetings) and reproductive (such as watering the plants). When you have your list, add the names of those who usually do them. **Step 3**. Ask yourself which tasks can be done by other members of the organisation and which can't. Try to explain why this happens in every case. **Step 4.** Propose a plan to rotate roles for the execution of these tasks in a concrete period of time, write them down in a visible way in the space you share, and keep the wheel going. Having someone else in charge of a task is a peer-to-peer learning mechanism that can help to redistribute power in an organisation.

NAME	**Identify Social Values**
CREDIT	ZEMOS98
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	5-8 members
TIME	90 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	There are some capacities that have a recognised social value. At the same time, many others are crucial for the sustainability of life but are not considered socially valuable. Many organisations find it difficult to provide a range different than the one established by the neoliberal system which values leadership, complete availability, economic resources, etc. This game will help your organisation to recognise everything required to produce a project, a campaign, etc. and give value to other tasks, capacities, knowledges, ideas, etc.
HOW	**Step 1.** Let's picture your organisation as a house with foundations, two floors and a roof. The foundations provide the scenario for the house to be built: internal relations and friendships, tasks to keep the organisation running, being responsible for your colleague's welfare, etc. The first floor has the material resources to guarantee that the organisation can achieve its goals. The second floor is where knowledge and capabilities are kept, both individual and collective. The roof is where the goals of the organisation are. **Step 2.** Start with the roof. Have a collective conversation about the general goals of your organisation. Pick three major goals and write them on the top of the house. **Step 3**. When the goals are done, ask yourself, individually, these two questions in relation to the different parts of the house: - What do I do and usually get social credit for? - What do I do and don't get any social credit for? - What would I like to do but don't usually find the time, resources or support to do? Pick a different color for each of these questions. **Step 4**. Share your answers with the rest of the group and stick your answers in the different parts of the house. Analyse the results according to what your colleagues think is socially valued within your organisation, what is not, and what is something most people are willing to learn. A lack in the foundations of your house will make your aims more fragile in the long term.

NAME	**Happiness Manifestx**
CREDIT	FRIDA Fund
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	Everyone in an organisation
TIME	60 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	This manifestx works as an inspiration for individuals working in organisations such as social movements, NGOs for social change and funders working with grantees.
HOW	This manifestx is the road map used by FRIDA Fund to acknowledge and respect the time spent on care for members and grantees of their own organisation. It is also an invitation for everyone to adopt, develop and implement their own agreements in the spaces they work. Take into account that this manifestx is an ongoing constant work in progress. It is, as FRIDA Fund says, 'a breathing document' to keep joyful in our movements. We invite you to read the manifestx and adopt those co-living rules that are useful for your organisation; but we also invite you to imagine new ones better adapted to your context!



Credit: FRIDA Found



Credit: FRIDA Found

ADVANCED

NAME	**Tablecloth**
CREDIT	ZEMOS98 & Colaborabora
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	5-8 people
TIME	200 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	The tablecloth is a useful tool for any kind of organisation, even if they are more hierarchical than the ones we have been talking about in this open paper. Usually, under a surface of very strong rules there are many informal agreements going on. Sometimes these can enrich the organisation, and others are displays of power dynamics. We encourage you to use the tablecloth as a tool to unveil what's not currently visible in your social organisation, your NGO or your foundation.
HOW	The tablecloth will spark an in-depth debate about the governance of an organisation, taking into consideration both its formal rules and informal dynamics, but also the material and knowledge resources at its disposal. It is also a useful tool to share with peers how you work internally. **Step 1.** Gather a group of four to seven persons you trust, persons that can offer you feedback about the way you work. **Step 2.** Prepare your own tablecloth. It's important that it's big enough to write on. **Step 3**. The Tablecloth has four different parts: 1. **THE CENTER:** Name, main goals of the organisation and history. 2. **THE HOUSE**. An area devoted to internal aspects of a community regarding organizational issues, resources, arrangements, learnings: ideology, statements that define the project, decisions taken, decision making spaces, values, ways of acting, etc. Questions which can help to initiate the conversation about this area: How do they organize the community? Who does what? What kind of problems led to what kind of solutions? Where do they take the decisions?

HOW	
	3. **THE FEED.** Those things mobilizing the group, motivations as well as needs. Some possible questions: Do you have free-riders inside of the group? Who? (Give some context about the group and his/her functioning) The conflicts: are they obstacles or motivations? Do other threats exist? Are they internal or external? Who or what is responsible for these threats? 4. **DARKNESS.** The threats the collective deals with. These threats can be external, produced by the sociopolitical context for example; or internal , produced by some specific situation within the community. Some possible questions: Which is “the feed” of the group? What makes the group “hungry” about its goals? What mobilizes it? What are the challenges? What are the needs? What are the vulnerabilities? Why use a tablecloth? Because we want to give value to what’s common(s), the table, the relaxed conversation, the whispering, the jokes, the skin, the guts. Keep in mind: filling in and dressing up the tablecloth is something every person in the table should do. It is possible and desirable to establish relations, connections, dependencies between one section and another. Do not hesitate about using arrows, suspension points or any map legends you think will be useful to link to different points on the tablecloth.





NAME	**Care laboratories**
CREDIT	Open to be collectively developed
HOW MANY PEOPLE?	5-8 people
TIME	200 minutes
WHY SHOULD YOU TRY?	Care laboratories is just an invitation to develop a space together for the sustainability of care in our organisations. It can be shaped in many different ways but it starts from the assumption that we urgently need these spaces in every kind of organisation.
HOW	Care laboratories is not a methodology, a tool or a device but an open invitation to keep thinking about this together. We imagine it as a permanent space in social organisations that benefit from peer to peer methodologies and actions that foster spaces where power dynamics can be openly discussed. As we have pointed out, these care debates have to produce material shifts in the way organisations manage their resources. Care labs is a space where members can research, develop and care for processes that have an impact on the organisational level and the way they interact with their working context. Hereafter, we outline some of the general values a Care Laboratory needs to take into account for its implementation: • **Trust** in members who are working in this area of the organisation. We have faith in collective intelligence as a driving force of our practices. • **Knowledge exchange.** We continually learn from each other and we refuse the idea of experts and non-experts. We have to foster every kind of knowledge exchange and be open to debate. • **Explore other languages and narratives** that adapt better to the challenges we face. Visual and textual devices can help to include others who don't feel comfortable about taking so much time while talking. • **Inclusivity.** If we want our experiences to succeed, we have to remain radically open to inclusion of different voices, perspectives and backgrounds. • Strive for the **common good**. Care laboratories aim to improve the welfare of the organisations. • **Document** everything, both in creative ways (short videos, graphics, visuals, etc.) and in traditional ways (notes, documents, etc.). In order to achieve greater engagement and to help other communities join the experiment, it's really important to leave a trace.

VI. Credits

PEDAGOGY OF CARE OPEN PAPER IS AIMED TO TRIGGER A DEBATE AROUND THE WAY WE DEAL WITH CARE IN SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS. IT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED OUT OF MULTIPLE CONVERSATIONS WE HAVE HAD WITH PERSONS WORKING IN SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS ACROSS EUROPE IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. YET, WE WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT WE DON'T HAVE CERTAINTIES: THIS IS A CONSTANT WORK IN PROGRESS. WE MUST EMBRACE EXPERIMENTATION AND DIALOGUE IN OUR ORGANISATIONS IF WE WANT TO MAKE THEM MORE DEMOCRATIC AND SUSTAINABLE IN ORDER TO BETTER STRUGGLE FOR A FAIRER WORLD.

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CONTACT

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Or you can get in contact with us at info@zemos98.org

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